

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A process of making a **tacky** polymeric hydrogel **on a substrate** comprising maleic anhydride or maleic acid polymer, or copolymer thereof, with an alkylvinylether or olefin, crosslinked with a crosslinking agent having at least 2 crosslinkable groups, where the crosslinkable group is selected from the group consisting of an alcohol (-OH), amine (-NH₂) or alcohol-amine (-OH) (-NH₂), and water which comprises forming a reaction mixture of maleic anhydride or maleic acid-polymer or copolymer thereof with an alkyl vinyl ether or olefin, with said crosslinking agent, in a predetermined portion as a paste or slurry **onto said substrate** with water, and reacting and extruding the paste or slurry at a predetermined temperature to form said **tacky** polymeric hydrogel **product**.

Claim 2. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein said crosslinking agent is a polyol.

Claim 3. (Original) A process according to claim 2 wherein said polyol is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, glycerol, glucose, sorbitol, pentaerithritol, nonionic surfactants, alginates, starch, cellulose.

Claim 4. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein said crosslinking agent is a polyamine or ethoxylated amine.

Claim 5. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein said crosslinking agent is an aminoalcohol.

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Claim 6. (Original) A process according to claim 4 wherein said polyamine is an amino acid.

Claim 7. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the mole ratio of said alcohol (-OH) or amine (-NH₂) groups in the crosslinking agent to carboxyl groups (-COOH) in the polymer or copolymer is 1:10 to 10:1.

Claim 8. (Original) A process according to claim 7 wherein said mole ratio of -OH or -NH₂:COOH is 2:10 to 7:1.

Claim 9. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein water is present in an amount of at least 20% by weight of the hydrogel.

Claim 10. (Original) A process according to claim 1 in which the crosslinked polymer is an ester or amide/imide, or both.